

Claims

1.-44. (canceled)

45. (new) A method for supplying a number of service providers with technical service devices, wherein each of the service providers is assigned a plurality of service devices in each case and each of the service providers in each case provides services to a plurality of installation sites which are at different locations from storage sites for their service devices, the method comprising the following steps:

managing the service devices by a device service provider to which the respective plurality of service devices is made available by the service providers, wherein the managing is performed with the aid of a data processing system, wherein each of the service providers has access to the data processing system and is able to request a delivery of a service device to a desired installation site via the data processing system; and

delivering the requested service device to the desired installation site by the device service provider.

46. (new) The method as claimed in claim 45, wherein the device service provider has a plurality of self-owned additional service devices which the service providers can request via the data processing system for delivery to the desired installation site.

47. (new) The method as claimed in claim 45, wherein at least one of the service providers can request a service device of another of the service providers via the data processing system.

48. (new) The method as claimed in claim 45, wherein following a request for a service device by one of the service providers the following steps are executed by the data processing system:

- checking of the availability of the requested service device in the service provider's service device inventory managed by the device service provider, and

- if there is availability in the service device inventory of the service provider, delivering the service device from the service provider's service device inventory.

49. (new) The method as claimed in claim 48, wherein the following further steps are executed by the data processing system:

- if there is no availability in the service device inventory of the service provider, checking the availability of the service device in a service device inventory owned by the device service provider, and

- if there is availability in the device service provider's own service device inventory, delivery of the service device from the device service provider's own service device inventory.

50. (new) The method as claimed in claim 49, wherein the following further steps are executed by the data processing system:

- if there is no availability in the device service provider's own service device inventory, checking the availability of the service device in the service device inventories of the further service providers, and

- if there is availability in the service device inventories of the further service providers, delivering the service device

from the service device inventory of one of the further service providers.

51. (new) The method as claimed in claim 50, wherein the following further steps are executed by the data processing system:

if there is no availability in the service device inventory of the further service providers, purchasing and delivering the service device by the device service provider.

52. (new) The method as claimed in claim 45, wherein the technical service devices comprise tools, and/or measuring means, and/or testing means.

53. (new) The method as claimed in claim 45, wherein the service providers access the data processing system via a data communications network.

54. (new) The method as claimed in claim 53, wherein the data communications network is the Internet and/or an intranet.

55. (new) The method as claimed in claim 45, wherein a device data record is stored in the data processing system for each of the service devices, said device data record containing data uniquely characterizing the respective service device in terms of device type, location and user.

56. (new) The method as claimed in claim 55, wherein the device data record further includes device owner data, and/or leasing costs data, and/or purchase price data.

57. (new) The method as claimed in claim 55, wherein the device data record further includes a date for a recall of the service device.

58. (new) The method as claimed in claim 57, wherein the data processing system automatically compares a current date with the date for a recall of the service device, and wherein if the current date exceeds the recall date, a recall of the service device to the device service provider is initiated.

59. (new) The method as claimed in claim 57, wherein the date for a recall of the service device is a date for a calibration of the service device.

60. (new) The method as claimed in claim 45, wherein the service providers have a defined set of service personnel who can request service devices, and wherein in the data processing system is stored for each of the service personnel a respective personnel data record containing data uniquely characterizing the service personnel in terms of name and associated service provider.

61. (new) The method as claimed in claim 60, wherein the personnel data record comprises criteria for the validity of a device request and/or a person with release authorization for the release of an invalid device request.

62. (new) The method as claimed in claim 61, wherein, when a device request is made by service personnel the data processing system checks the validity of the device request regarding the personnel-related admissibility criteria, and wherein, if the device request is not valid, the data processing system requests

a person with release authorization associated with the service personnel to initiate a release of the device request.

63. (new) The method as claimed in claim 61, wherein the personnel-related admissibility criteria comprise a maximum permitted purchase price.

64. (new) The method as claimed in claim 60, wherein one or more of the service devices are assigned to service personnel in the data processing system, and wherein only the service devices assigned to said service personnel are offered by the data processing system in the form of a catalog for requests.

65. (new) A method for supplying a number of service providers with technical service devices, wherein each of the service providers is assigned a plurality of service devices in each case and each of the service providers in each case provides services to a plurality of installation sites which are at different locations from storage sites for their service devices, comprising the following method steps:

administration, with the aid of a data processing system, of the service devices by a device service provider to which the respective plurality of service devices is made available by the service providers, each of the service providers being able to access the data processing system and to request, via the data processing system, a delivery of one or more of their service devices to a desired installation site, and

delivery of the requested service device(s) to the desired installation site by the device service provider.

66. (new) A system for supplying a plurality of service providers with technical service devices, wherein each of the service providers is assigned a plurality of service devices in each case and each of the service providers in each case provides services at a number of installation sites that are at different locations from storage sites for their service devices, the system comprising:

a data processing system of a device service provider to whom the respective plurality of service devices is made available by the service providers, for administration of the service devices, whereby the data processing system is accessible to each of the service providers and a delivery of one or more of their service devices to a desired installation site can be requested via the data processing system; and

a mechanism for initiating the delivery of the requested service device(s) to the desired installation site by the device service provider.